



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**PRINCES RIDING  
RINGSALL  
LITTLE GADDESSEN  
BERKHAMSTED**

*on behalf of Mr & Mrs T. O'Connor*



**Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA**

**January 2006**

**ASC: 736/PRR/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	PRR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	736
<i>Event No:</i>		<i>Accession No:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Ringshall		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Little Gaddesden		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9794 1305		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garden to existing house		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of a two storey side extension		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/00/1471		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>			
<i>Client:</i>	Mr & Mrs T O'Connor Princes Riding Ringshall Little Gaddesden HP4 1LU		
<i>Contact name:</i>	C R Davey (Woodfield Design Ltd)		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Karin Semmelmann	<i>Date:</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> January 2006
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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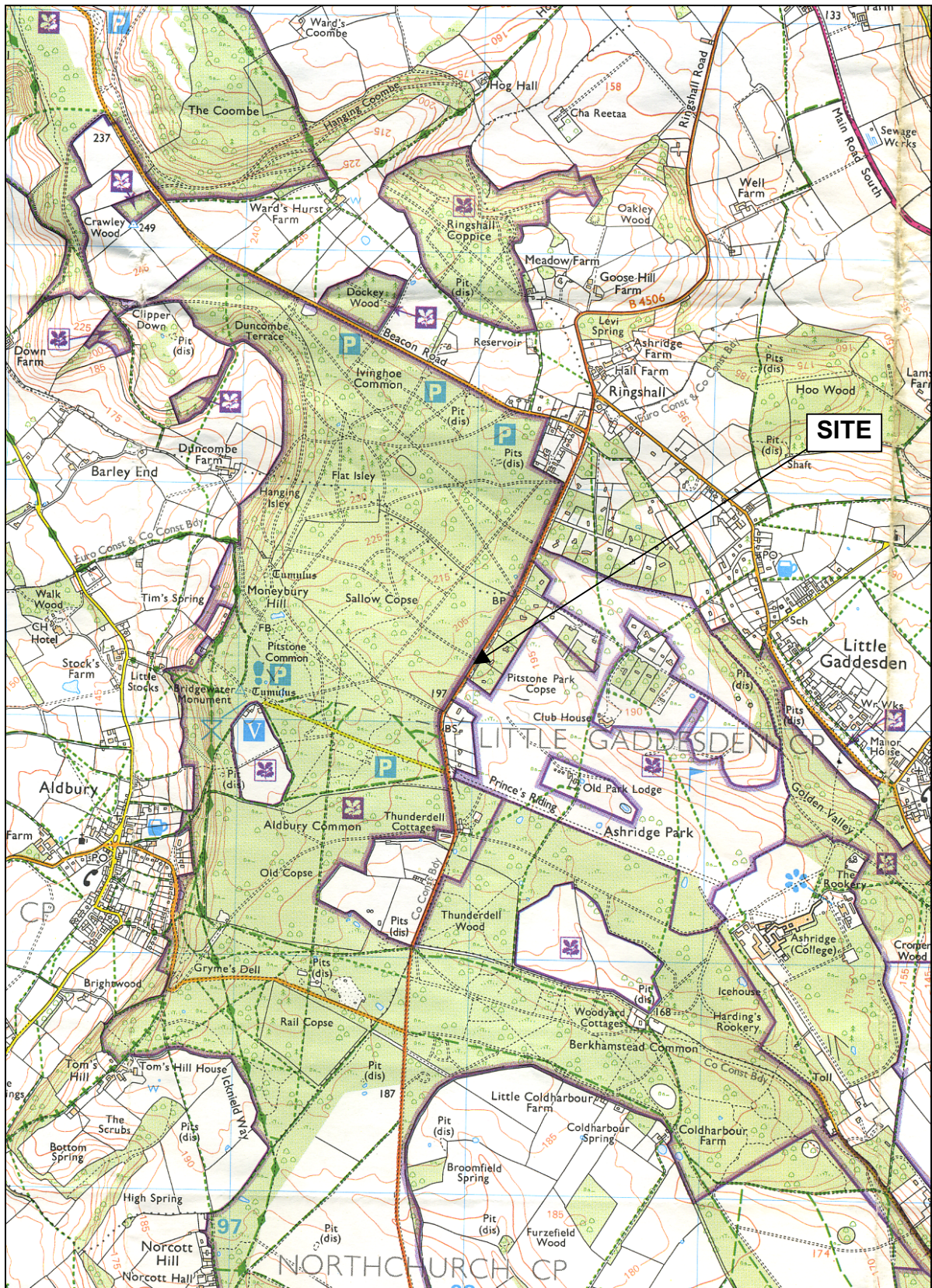


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In November and December 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire as part of a planning condition for the construction of a two-storey extension to the south-east. A buried soil horizon probably associated with recent building work was observed within the trenches in the north-eastern corner of the groundworks. No further archaeological features or finds were observed during the watching brief, which would suggest that, despite the proximity of Iron Age or Roman earthworks surveyed within Ashridge Park in recent years, the present site lies outside any known area of permanent or semi-permanent settlement.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In November and December 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out a watching brief at Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 9794 1305: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr & Mrs T. O'Connor, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2005), and a brief (Smith 2005) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Hertfordshire County Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 4/00/1471.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16)*, in response to proposals for the construction of a two-storey extension to the north-east.

### 1.3 *Location*

The site is located towards the centre of Ashridge Park, to the west of Little Gaddesden, centred on National Grid Reference SP 9794 1305 (Fig. 1). It is bounded by Ringhall Road to the west, a residential property to the south and parkland to the north and east.

### 1.4 *Description*

Princes Riding is one of a number of large properties, each with in its own extensive grounds, located along the west side of Ringshall Road. A single small outbuilding is located to the north-east of the development area. Apart from the house itself, there are no other extant buildings on the site. Access to the site is from Ringshall Road, which runs to the west of the site on a north-south alignment (Fig. 2).

### 1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are plateau drift and clay with flints, belonging to the Batcombe association (Soil Survey 1983 582a). They are described as *fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal water logging. Some well drained clayey soils over chalk. Variably flinty*. The site lies at c.195m AOD.

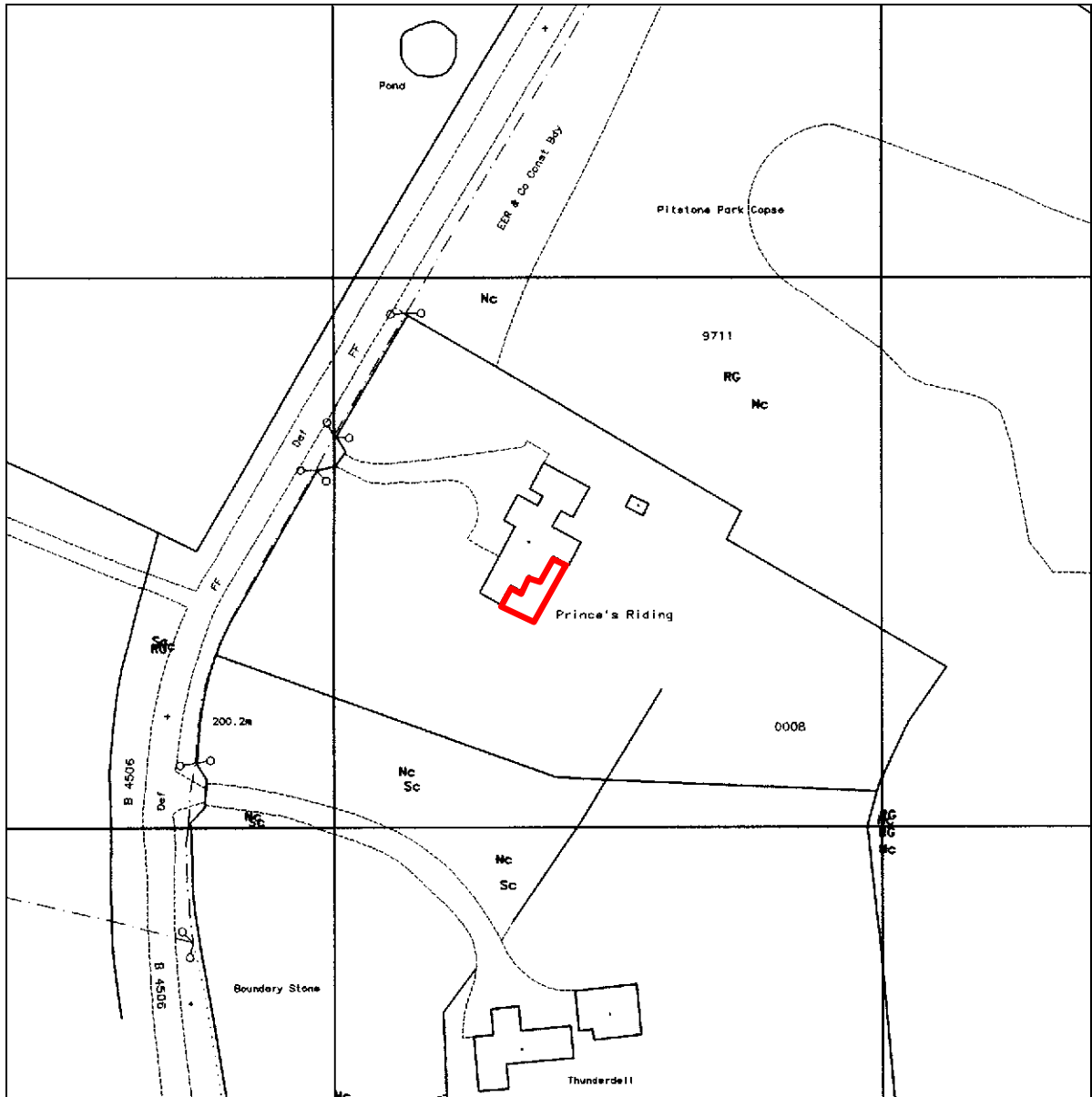


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 1), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains.
- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

### 2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGEO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### 2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3), which required:

- Soil, overburden and sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision.
- Inspection of subsoil deposits for archaeological features.
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits.
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits.
- Examination of spoil heaps for archaeological material.

### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

The site is situated within *Area of Archaeological Significance* 28. This covers Ashridge Park, Aldbury Common and adjacent areas, and contains a number of earthworks and linear features dating from the Roman and medieval periods. The area also contains evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British occupation.

#### 3.1 Prehistoric (before 800BC)

Round barrows and ring ditches are located at the head of the Bulbourne Valley at Ivinghoe, c.3km north of the site. Although this activity is some way from the site, it has been suggested that early prehistoric activity was more widespread than originally thought (McDonald 1995).

#### 3.2 Late Bronze Age -Iron Age (800BC-AD43)

Settlements of this period have been revealed at Pea Lane, Crawleys Lane and Bottom House Lane, on the south-west side of the Bulbourne Valley (*ibid.*), and at Pitstone and Ivinghoe (Bryant 1995). At Ivinghoe Beacon, c.3km north of the site, is a hill-fort that is of late Bronze Age date in its earliest phases. Along the line of the Chiltern scarp the *Ickniel Way* passes c.2km to the west of the site. This prehistoric trackway of uncertain date runs from the Wash to Wessex and the south coast.

#### 3.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)

Extensive areas of earthworks have been identified in Ashridge Park by a landscape survey carried out for the National Trust between 1985 and 1989 (Morris & Wainwright 1995). These earthworks are believed to represent a series of field systems, enclosures and settlements, and a possible religious site, all of probable late Iron Age or Roman date. A Roman lead counter or amulet was recovered in 1937 from the golf course, c.70m southeast of the site.

#### 3.4 Saxon and Medieval (c.450-1500)

Little is known of the study area in the centuries following the Roman period. Gaddesden (originally with no distinction between 'Great' and 'Little') evidently existed by the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, as it appears in a Saxon charter of AD812. The name 'Gaddesden' derives from the Anglo-Saxon *gaete* (kid) and *den* (valley). The area now occupied by Ashridge House and part of the Ashridge Estate lies within Little Gaddesden parish, which was formerly a part of the Saxon *Hundred of Dacorun*.

The manor of Ashridge was one of the principal landholdings in Little Gaddesden. It is first mentioned in 1285, when the Earl of Cornwall granted the manor to the college of Ashridge (Page 1914, 219). The manor remained in the possession of the college until the Dissolution in 1538/39, after which it became annexed to the manor of Little Gaddesden, and thereafter descended with the latter. Ashridge Park was enclosed before 1285 (*ibid.*). In 1283 Edmund, Earl of Cornwall and a nephew of Henry III founded a monastery at Ashridge, in honour of a holy relic - a phial of the 'Precious Blood of Christ' - he had acquired whilst campaigning in Germany. The order of monks installed there were known as *Bonhommes* (literally, 'good men'): the *College*



*de Bonhommies*, as the foundation was known, was one of only two monastic establishments of this order in England

### **3.5 Post-Medieval and modern (1500-Present)**

In 1539 the College was dissolved, and the remaining seventeen monks were pensioned off. Ashridge now became a royal residence, and was given to Princess Elizabeth by her brother Edward on his succession to the throne, though she never went there. In 1604 Ashridge was purchased by Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, later Viscount Brackley, and Lord Chancellor to James I. Egerton repaired the deserted monastic buildings, and added a domestic wing at each end of the Great Hall. The Egertons remained at Ashridge throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and continued to develop the estate. General John William Egerton, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl, was responsible for the creation of the present Ashridge House. The architect from 1808-1813 was James Wyatt: after his death the work was completed by his son Benjamin and his nephew Jeffrey Wyatville. The gardens were laid out by Humphrey Repton.

Following the death of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl in 1921, the estate was put on the market. Following a vigorous local and national campaign, funds were raised to allow the National Trust to purchase the parkland. The house and gardens were bought as a gift for the Conservative Party, and in 1929 Ashridge College was opened as a training centre for Conservative Party workers. During the Second World War the buildings were commandeered as a branch of Charing Cross Hospital, and additional concrete ward buildings were erected on parkland to the north of the house. After the war, the College became initially a finishing school for young ladies, and in 1959 turned to management training in industry, the role it continues to fulfil today.

## **4 Results**

- 4.1 Four trenches were monitored. All were 0.55m wide and between 1.05m and 1.55m deep. The stratigraphy comprised a very thin layer of topsoil (0.05m deep) over a 0.10m layer of orange clay beneath which was a brown, stoneless subsoil some 0.32m deep. This lay over the orange-brown, flinty clay natural (Fig. 6). A buried soil horizon consisting of a 0.05m deep layer of brown clay was revealed at the north-eastern end of the development (Plates 4 & 7).
  
- 4.2 The buried soil horizon may be associated with the building works that took place on the house in the 1970s. No other features and no finds were revealed during the watching brief.



**Plate 1:** Trench 1



**Plate 2:** Trench 2



**Plate 3:** Trench 3



**Plate 4:** Trench 4 looking SW



**Plate 5:** Trench 4 looking NE



**Plate 6:** NE facing section of Trench 1



**Plate 7:** NW facing section of Trench 4



**Plate 8:** SE facing junction of Trenches 3 & 4

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The site lies within Ashridge Park, which contains earthworks thought to represent field systems, enclosures and settlements of possible late Iron Age or Roman date. The paucity of archaeological remains observed on the site is probably due to the fact that the present house is of recent date and is likely to have been constructed within an area that has previously seen little permanent human activity. However, the gardens of Ashridge House were landscaped by Humphrey Repton in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible that this project was extensive enough to disturb any surviving archaeological remains on the present site.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to C.R. Davey of Woodfield Design Ltd for commissioning this project on behalf of Mr & Mrs O'Connor, the owners of the property, and Jonathan Smith of Hertfordshire County Council for providing the archaeological monitoring service.

The fieldwork for this project was undertaken by Jonathan Hunn, PhD MIFA. The report was written by Karin Semmelmann, MA AIFA and edited by Bob Zeepvat, BA MIFA.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. Original specialist reports and supporting information
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Dacorum Heritage Trust.

## 8. References


### *Standards & Specifications*

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Rouse, C. 2005 *Project Design for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden*. ASC Ltd.
- Smith J. 2005. *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden*. Hertfordshire County Archaeology Office

### *Secondary Sources*

- Bryant S.1995 'The Late Bronze Age of the North Chilterns' in Holgate (ed.) Chiltern Archaeology, Recent Work. A Handbook for the Next Decade. 17-27.
- McDonald T.1995 'The A41 Project, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust' in Holgate 1995, 120-123.
- Morris M. & A.Wainwright 1995 'Iron Age and Romano-British settlements and economy in the Upper Bulbourne Valley, Hertfordshire' in Holgate 1995, 68-75.
- Page W. (ed.) 1914 *The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire*, vol. ii.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

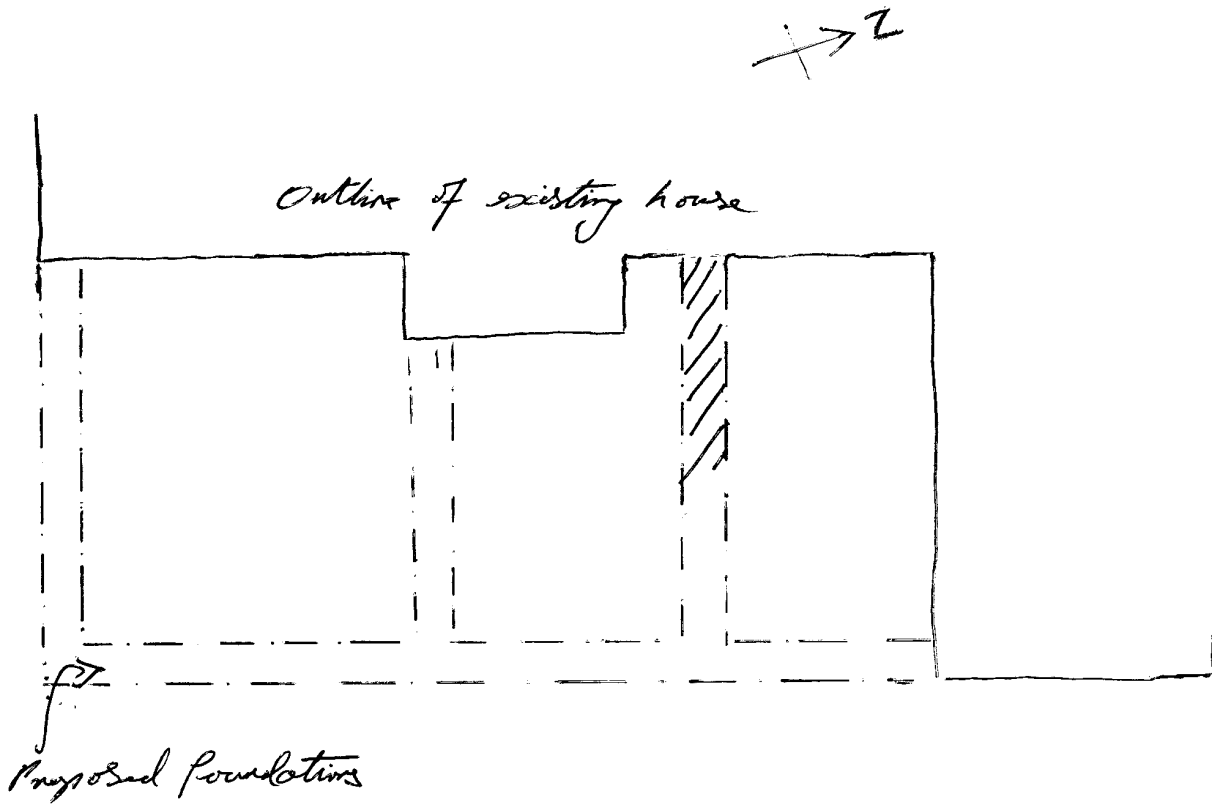
# Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 <b>A.S.C. LTD</b>		<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD</b>				
Project: <i>Princes Riding</i> <i>Little Gaddesden</i>		Project No/Code: <i>736 1 PRR</i>	Sheet: <i>1 of 4</i>			
Client/Developer: <i>Mr &amp; Mrs O'connors</i>		Date of visit: <i>24/11/05</i>				
Contact: <i>Bernie (Bernie)</i>		Phone: <i>07850-66707</i>				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>2pm</i>	Finish:				
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>						
Development Type:						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dull, breezy and damp</i>						
Observations: <i>Observed the beginning of the excavation of the strip foundation to the rear (south) of the existing building. There were c.0.55m wide by 1.05m deep. Topsoil about 1m existent by the house. So far only natural erode brown clay seen.</i>						
Comments: <i>Too overcast to take photographs</i>						

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003





/// Area observed

J.R.H 24/11/05



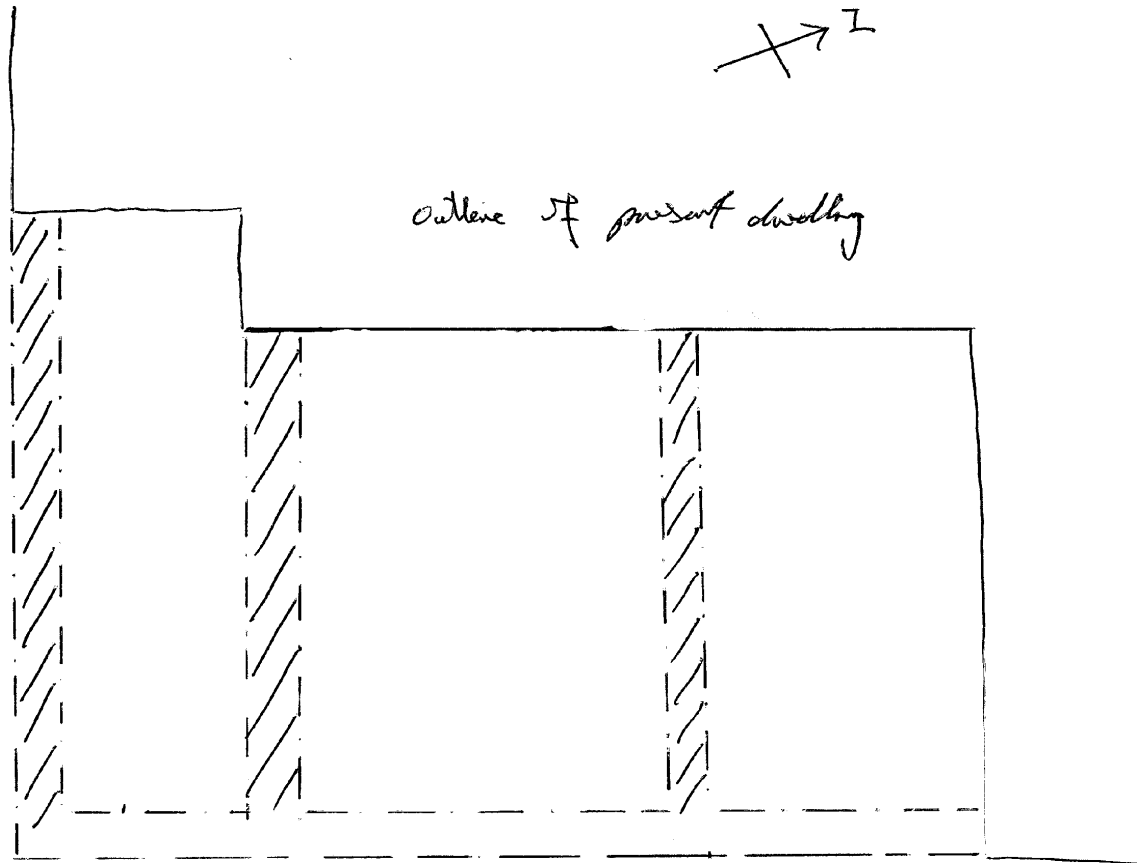
**A.S.C. LTD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: <i>Princes Riding</i>		Project No/Code: <i>736 1 PRR</i>	Sheet: <i>2 of 4</i>
<i>Little Gaddesden</i>		Date of visit: <i>25/11/05</i>	
Client/Developer <i>Mr and Mrs O'Connell</i>			
Contact: <i>Berrice</i>		Phone: <i>07850-66707</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>1.25 pm</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>JRH</i>			
<b>Development Type:</b>			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> <i>v. cold but dry and moderately clear.</i>			
<b>Observations:</b> <i>Observed three of the main E-W foundations. The dimensions were the same as previously along the Southern most footing and deeper due to the rising ground and proximity of tree roots (ie. 1.55m). The ground is made up as follows: v. thick topsoil 0.05m then 0.10m orange clay over a brown fairly stony subsoil 0.32m thick - the remainder is natural chalky clay. Depth of topsoil varies from trench to trench.</i>			
<b>Comments:</b> <i>No features or artifacts observed.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



Areas observed

25/n/05



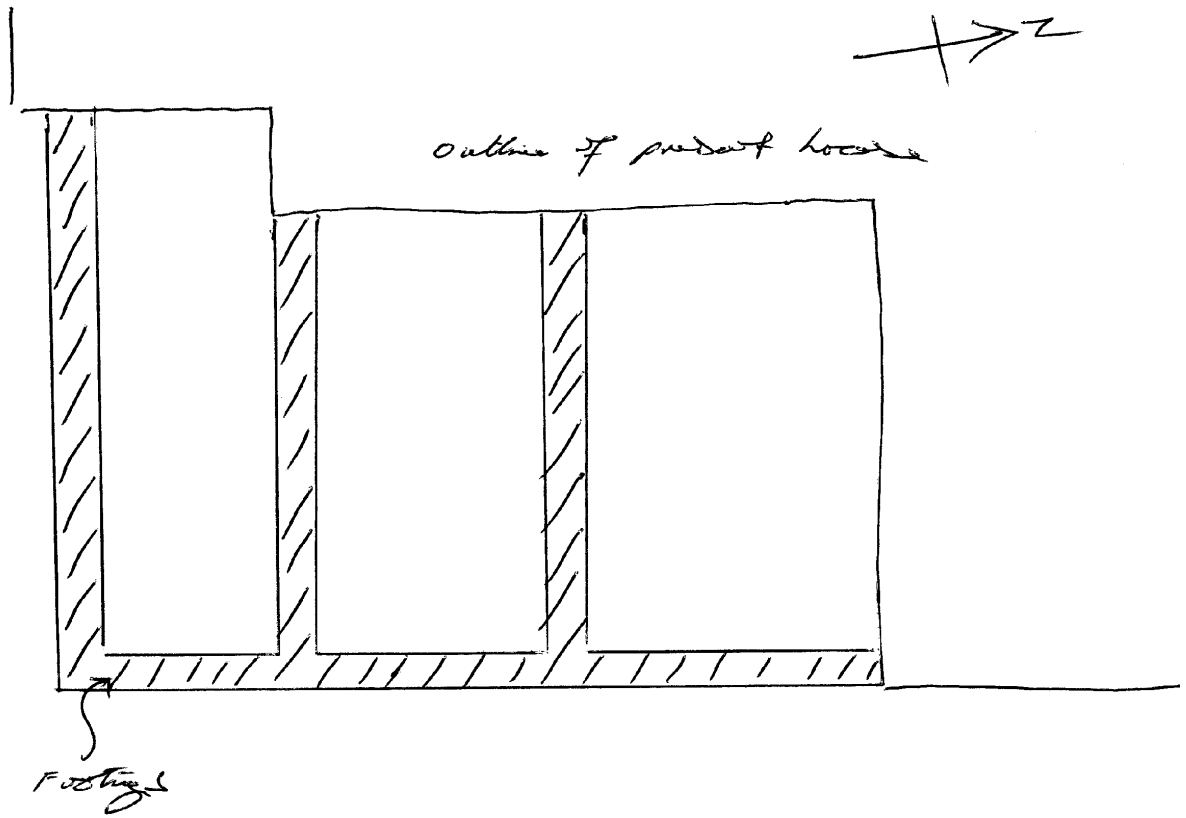
**A.S.C. LTD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: <i>Princes Riding</i> <i>Little Gaddesden</i>		Project No/Code: <i>7361PRK</i>	Sheet: <i>3</i> of <i>4</i>
Client/Developer <i>Mr &amp; Mrs O'Connor</i>		Date of visit: <i>29/11/05</i>	
Contact: <i>Burton</i>		Phone: <i>07850-66707</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>2.05</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>			
<b>Development Type:</b>			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> <i>Cool, damp, with v. weak sun getting clearer by 3.</i>			
<b>Observations:</b> <i>Saw the remains of N-S foundation. That is, near of house. Foundation as before 1.05m deep. Apart from the remains of an old shower bed (4.5m wide) E-W, the trench was cut into the natural clay. V. thin topsoil (0.05m) over a 0.5m thick brown clay which is the natural B horizon. Beneath this is the reddish brown, flinty clay.</i>			
<b>Comments:</b> <i>No features or artefacts observed.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



JRH Nov 29 2005



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Princes Riding Little Gaddesden		Project No/Code: 7361 PRR	Sheet: 4 of 4
Client/Developer: Mr & Mrs O'Connell		Date of visit: 14/12/05	
Contact: Bernie	Phone: 07850 - 66707		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 1.55	Finish: 2.35	
Completed by: JRM			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull & damp.			
Observations: Saw the first part of the section - still the same as the adjacent ones. Very clean with no artefacts or traces of premodern features.			
Comments: No further visits proposed.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Princes Riding House, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden				SITE NO/CODE: 736/PPR
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			X	Trenches being excavated
2			X	Trench 3
3			X	Trenches 2 & 1
4			X	Trench 1
5			X	NE facing section of Trench 1
6			X	Trench 1 being excavated
7			X	Rear of the house
8			X	Trench 1 under excavation
9			X	NW facing section of Trench 4
10			X	Trench 4 looking SE
11			X	Trees to the rear of the garden
12			X	Northern end of Trench 4
13			X	Northern end of Trench 4
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**Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form**

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire					
Short Description:	In November and December 2006 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire as part of a planning condition for the construction of a two-storey extension to the south-east. A buried soil horizon probably associated with recent building work was observed within the trenches in the north-eastern corner of the groundworks. No further archaeological features or finds were observed during the watching brief, which would suggest that, despite the proximity of Iron Age or Roman earthworks surveyed within Ashridge Park in recent years, the present site lies outside any known area of permanent or semi-permanent settlement.					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		None	
Current land use:	Residential garden		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		No	
Monument type:	N/a		Monument period:		N/a	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Hertfordshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		SP 9794 1305	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Herts. HP4 1LU					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	c. 10m x c. 7m		Height OD: (metres)		c. 195m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	Jonathan Smith		Project design originator:		Calli Rouse	
Project Manager:	Jonathan Hunn		Director/Supervisor:		Jonathan Hunn	
Sponsor / funding body:	Mr & Mrs O'Connor					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	24.11.2005		End date:		14.12.2005	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:						
Paper:	Dacorum Heritage Trust		1 box file			
Digital:	Dacorum Heritage Trust		1 CD			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Serial title & volume:		Author(s):		Page nos	
Princes Riding Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire			Karin Semmelmann		25	
Date:	4 <sup>th</sup> January 2006					



**Appendix 4: SMR Summary Sheet**

Site name and address: Princes Ridings, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Herts.		
County: Hertfordshire		District: Dacorum
Village/Town: Ringshall		Parish: Little Gaddesden
Planning application reference: 4/00/1471		
Client name, address, & tel. no: Mr & Mrs O'Connor (address as above)		
Nature of application: Construction of a two storey extension		
Present land use: Residential garden		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: n/a
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 9794 1305		Site code: 736/PRR
Site director/Organization: Bob Zeepvat / ASC Ltd		
Type of work: Watching brief		
Date of work:	Start: 24.11.2005	Finish: 14.12.2005
Curating museum: Dacorum Heritage Trust		
Related SMR nos:		Periods represented: Modern
Relevant previous summaries/reports		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>In November and December 2006 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Princes Riding, Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire as part of a planning condition for the construction of a two-storey extension to the south-east.</p> <p>A buried soil horizon probably associated with recent building work was observed within the trenches in the north-eastern corner of the groundworks. No further archaeological features or finds were observed during the watching brief, which would suggest that, despite the proximity of Iron Age or Roman earthworks surveyed within Ashridge Park in recent years, the present site lies outside any known area of permanent or semi-permanent settlement.</p>		
Author: Karin Semmelmann		Date: 4 <sup>th</sup> January 2005